



# A m e r i C o r p s \* V I S T A

AmeriCorps\*VISTA is part of a network of AmeriCorps programs operated by the Corporation for National Service.

# STORIES FROM PROJ

**AMERICORPS\*VISTA PROJECTS.** AmeriCorps\*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) has a 30-year track record of helping people overcome poverty in communities nationwide. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members live and serve in low-income neighborhoods, reaching out to residents and developing local leadership to create sustainable change. There are not necessarily available placements in these AmeriCorps\*VISTA projects.

## ✦ HEALTH

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members develop and expand community-based health care activities in medically underserved areas. At the Allegany Health Right Project in Allegany, Md., AmeriCorps\*VISTA members help provide services to low-income community members who are ineligible for government assistance. These AmeriCorps\*VISTA members recruit medical professionals and other community volunteers, solicit medicine and supplies from pharmaceutical companies, and inform the community about the services that are available. Using a unique referral system, the Allegany Health Right Project allows patients to be seen in a doctor's office instead of a clinic. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members develop skills and knowledge specific to health care, and experience in public relations.

## ✦ HOUSING

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members recruit local volunteers to repair, renovate, and expand existing housing, or to construct new homes at affordable rates. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members work with Habitat for Humanity to build houses in the colonias—unincorporated rural housing located along the Texas-Mexico border in McAllen, Texas. Using their Spanish language skills, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members coordinate community outreach, fundraising activities, and volunteer recruitment and placement. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members improve their Spanish fluency, learn fundraising skills, and develop their understanding of Mexican and border cultures.

## ✦ LITERACY/EDUCATION

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members establish and expand education programs that serve at-risk children, youth, and the growing population of illiterate

adults. In Washington D.C., as part of the America Reads Challenge, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve in elementary and high schools to pair community volunteers with students and establish family resource centers. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members recruit and coordinate volunteers and manage communication between parents, teachers, tutors, and students. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members train tutors as reading specialists and gain experience in education and reading curricula as they help improve the reading skills of children nationwide.

In Pasadena, Calif., AmeriCorps\*VISTA members at the Union Station Foundation, a family homeless shelter, offer literacy and peer tutoring to shelter residents. They support the program by fundraising, writing grants, and recruiting and training community volunteers to coordinate the program. They also help to identify resources to provide additional services and promote the program in the community. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members develop their grant writing, fundraising, and public relations skills.

## ✦ TECHNOLOGY

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members are establishing and expanding computer labs in low-income neighborhoods and creating job training and resume writing programs for residents who would not otherwise have access to a computer or the Internet. In Seattle, Wash., AmeriCorps\*VISTA members are developing computer learning centers in federally assisted multi-family low-income housing. In Ohio, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve throughout the state with the Ohio Community Computing Center Networks. Housed in store fronts, church basements, schools, and libraries, these centers are located in low-income neigh-

borhoods and to provide access to technology for people who would typically not have access. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members write grants for computers and software, recruit participants and volunteers to provide technical assistance to community members, involve schools integrating computer literacy into curriculum, and develop volunteer training programs. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members strengthen their own computer skills and enhance their knowledge of technology.

### ❖ COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members research, organize, and develop activities designed to generate income and enhance the economic potential of low-income urban and rural areas. Throughout New England, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members implement peer lending programs and micro-business support as part of Working Capital—a nonprofit economic development program. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members serve as a link between Working Capital and entrepreneurs and universities, business training programs, government programs, and other resources. They research educational materials, write newsletters, organize networking events, and make resources available to members who need them. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members gain valuable business skills that can be applied to the nonprofit or private sector.

### ❖ HUNGER

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members increase the production, solicitation, and distribution capacity of organizations providing food to the hungry. In Incline Village, Nev., AmeriCorps\*VISTA members help families to break the cycle of hunger through Project MANA (Making Available Nutrition Available). They educate and empower people experiencing hunger by coordinating the distribution of non-perishable foods. As AmeriCorps\*VISTA members recruit and coordinate local volunteers, organize food rescues, and arrange and carry out emergency food deliveries, they develop skills in fundraising, grant writing, and event planning.

### ❖ PUBLIC SAFETY/CRIME PREVENTION

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members work on crime prevention programs—such as organizing the support of low-income parent groups to address crime and substance abuse problems. At the SNAP (Safe Neighborhood Action Plan) project in Denver, Colo., an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member works with residents and owners/managers of HUD-assisted properties to begin rehabilitation of their communities by first addressing the issue of crime. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA member serves as an advocate to the residents—to develop resident's councils, implement social services, assist in landlord/tenant relations, and serve as a liaison between the residents, property managers, and other community organizations. The AmeriCorps\*VISTA member gains an in-depth understanding of the inner-workings of a community and skills in community organization, advocacy, and grant writing.

### ❖ DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

AmeriCorps\*VISTA members help to meet the many needs of families affected by domestic violence. At the Arkansas Northeast Council on Domestic Violence, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members establish shelters, coordinate counseling and enrichment activities for children and a food and nutrition program, recruit and train volunteers, and raise community awareness of the issues related to domestic violence. AmeriCorps\*VISTA members also provide resources to professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, on domestic violence issues and elicit support from local organizations. They receive training and awareness in domestic violence, and learn coordination and development skills applicable to many community-based organizations.

**For more information or an application, call 1-800-942-2677 (TDD 1-800-833-3722) or visit the national service website at <http://www.nationalservice.org>**